

Wednesday, August 10

- Summer Essays are due
- European Countries Map Quiz

Friday, August 12

- European Bodies of Water and Landforms Map Quiz

Monday, August 15

- European Cities Map Quiz
- Renaissance Art Project Due

Humanism

Characteristics

1. Revival of classical learning.

- classical = Greece & Rome

2. Focus on studying ancient languages

- Latin at first
- 1396: Florence invited a Byzantine scholar to come and teach Greek at the University of Florence
- After 1453 (Fall of Constantinople)
 - influx of Greek scholars into Italy
 - led to increased study of Greek

Characteristics

3. Belief in individualism and human potential

- ◉ contrast with medieval view of man
- ◉ virtú: “quality of being a man”
- ◉ key to the good life is reason and nature

4. Rejected Aristotelian philosophy and medieval Scholasticism in favor of:

- ◉ writings of Plato
- ◉ Roman authors (Cicero, Livy, and Virgil)
- ◉ early Christian writers

Characteristics

5. Civic Humanism: education should prepare leaders who are active in civic affairs. (Humanist studies should lead to a better society.)
6. Humanism was more secular and lay dominated yet most Humanists were believing Christians.
 - Humanism in the context of the Renaissance is not the same as the current definition of Humanism. (a set of beliefs that rejects the idea of the afterlife and divine intervention in the universe)
7. Emphasis on liberal arts education including: grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and politics.
 - To be educated was to know the *classics* for much of modern European history.

LEADING RENAISSANCE HUMANISTS

Petrarch



- 1304-1374
- first modern writer
 - literature no longer subordinate to religion
- claimed that the Middle Ages were the “dark ages”
- possibly the first to use critical textual analysis to ancient texts
- wrote in the Italian vernacular (as Dante did earlier)
- *Letters to the Ancient Dead*
- *Lives of Illustrious Men*

Boccaccio



- 1313-1375
- compiled an encyclopedia of Greek and Roman mythology
- *Decameron* is his most famous work
 - consisted of 100 *earthly* tales that comprise a social commentary on 14th century Italy
 - aimed to impart wisdom of human character and behavior (especially sexual and economic misbehavior).

Leonardo Bruni

- 1370-1444
- first to use the term “humanism”
 - *studia humanitatis*
- one of the most important civic humanists
- served as chancellor of Florence
- wrote a history of Florence
 - possibly the first modern history
 - used primary source documents
 - divided the history of Florence into historical periods



Lorenzo Valla

- 1407-1457
- expert on Latin language
 - *Elegances of the Latin Language* (1444)
- *On the False Donation of Constantine* (1444)
 - exposed the Donation of Constantine as an 8th Century fraud, using textual criticism
 - Church claimed it was granted vast territories by the 4th century Roman Emperor Constantine.
- pointed out errors in the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible
- devoted Catholic but his work gave ammunition to those who challenged the authority of the Church



Marsilio Ficino

- 1433-1499
- important humanist philosopher of the 15th century
- founded the Platonic Academy at the behest of Cosimo de' Medici in the 1460s
 - led to the spread of works and philosophy of Plato throughout Europe
- translated Plato's works into Latin, giving Europeans access.



Pico della Mirandola

- 1463-1494
- member of Platonic Academy
- *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486)
 - most famous Renaissance work on the nature of humankind
 - humans created by God and thus given tremendous potential for greatness and union with God if they desired it.
 - Humans could, however, choose a negative course.
 - Humans have the free will to be great or fail.



MCKAY 366

Baldassare Castiglione

- 1478-1529
- *The Book of the Courtier* (1528)
- one of the most important works on Renaissance education
- special qualities necessary to be a true gentleman (knight = courtier)
 - emphasized physical **and** intellectual abilities
 - rejected crude social habits
 - spitting on floors
 - eating without utensils
 - wiping your nose with your sleeve



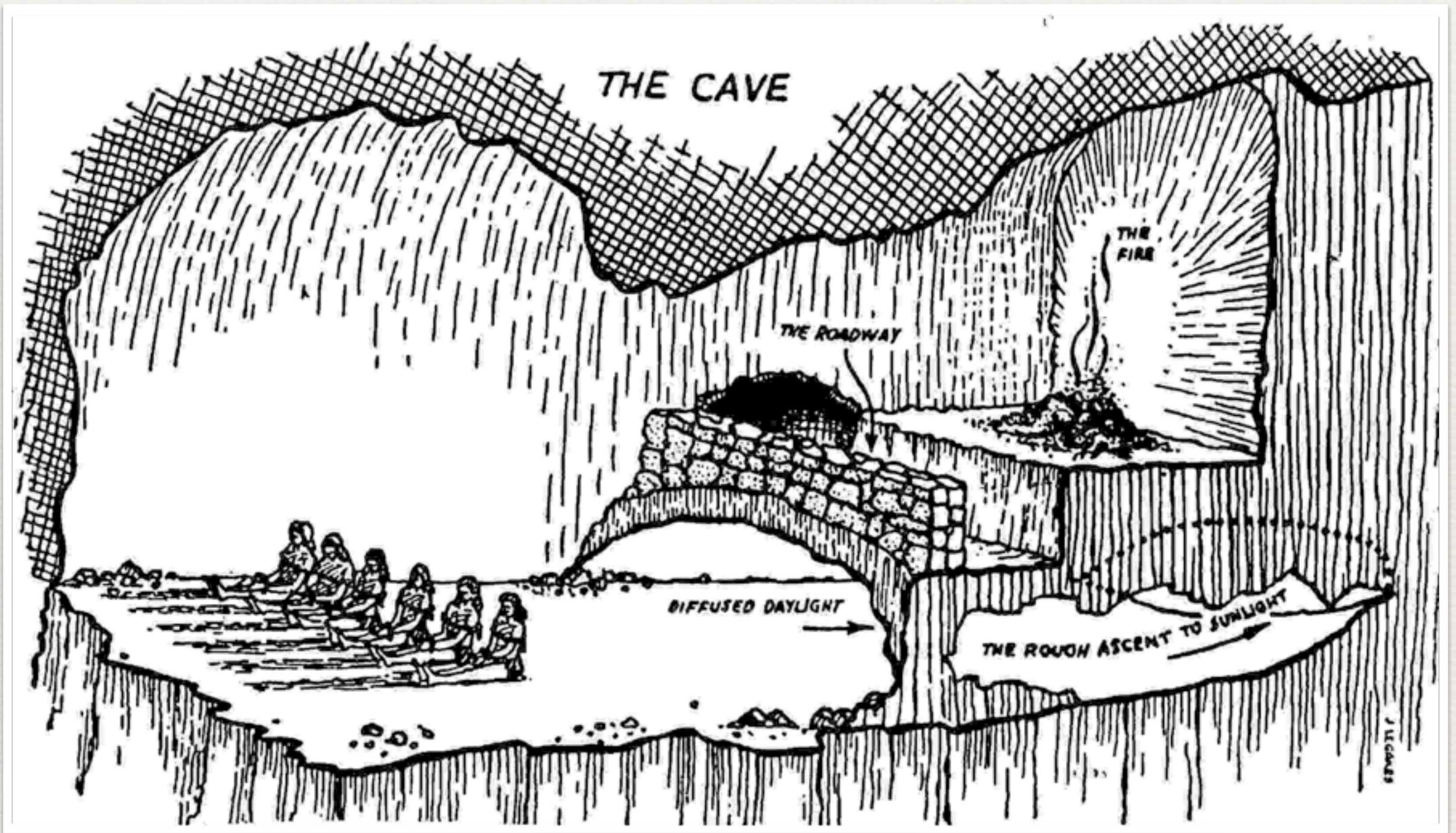
Baldassare Castiglione

- Described the ideal of the Renaissance man
 - well-versed in Greek and Roman classics
 - accomplished warrior
 - could play music and dance
 - modest but confident demeanor
- contrasted with the medieval view of being a master in only one area
- virtú: the quality of being a great man in whatever noble pursuit

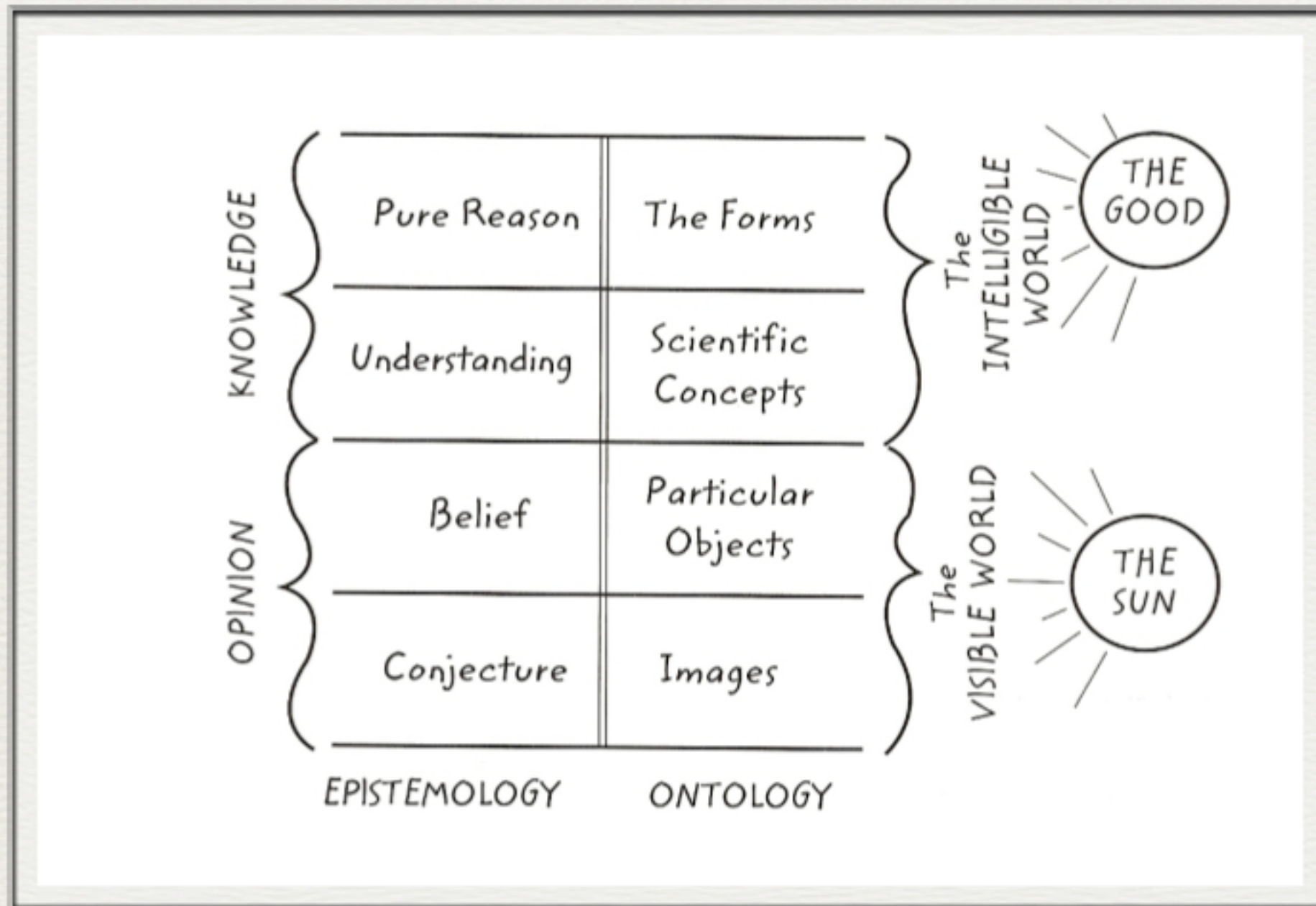


Neoplatonism

Plato

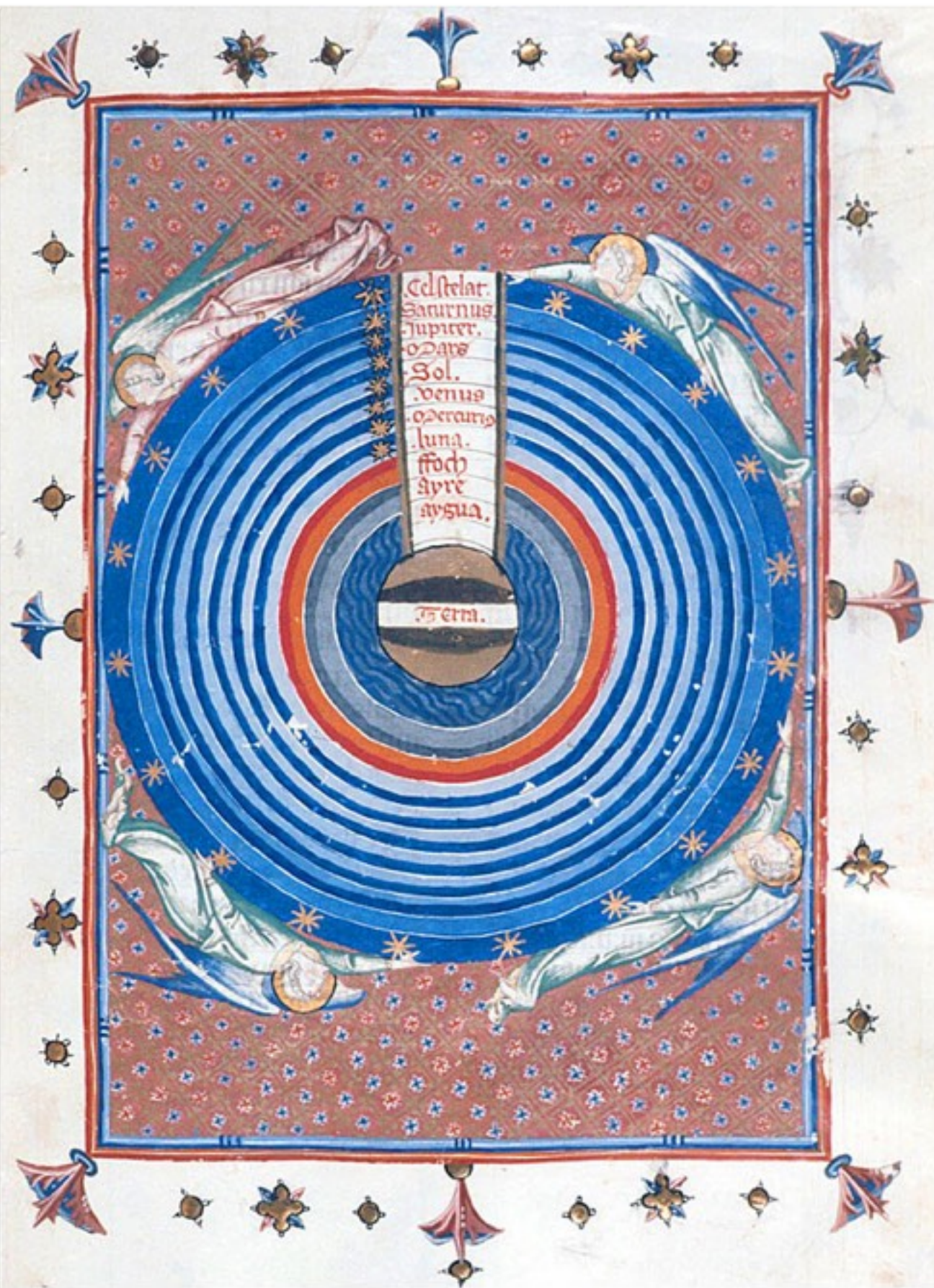


Plato



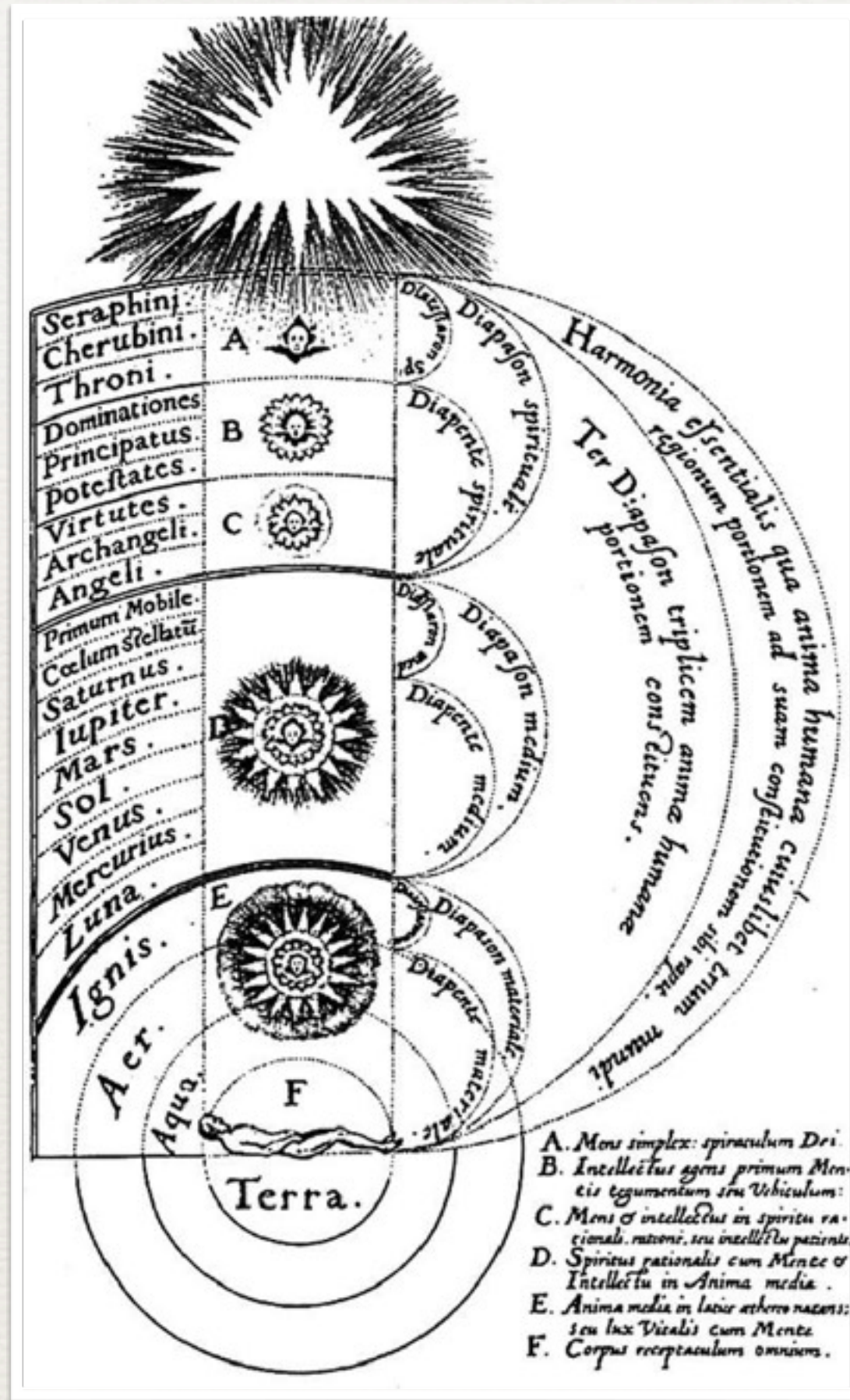
Plato





Great Chain of Being

Cosmological Diagram of the Spheres Surrounded by Angels.
Matfré Ermengau of Béziers. *Breviari d'Amour*, late 14th century.
BL MS Yates Thompson 31 f. 66 .



Great Chain of Being